

The Figure of the Angel Raphael

According to his Farewell Address in Tob 12:6-20

BEATE EGO, OSNABRÜCK

In the narration of Tobit, which originated presumably in the Eastern diaspora around 200 BC¹, the figure of the angel Raphael plays a prominent role and is one of the main action performing characters. In the course of this, the passage Tob 12:6-20 is forasmuch of importance as the angel reveals himself in a speech and therewith makes statements about his own character and ministry. After a general overview of the position of the passage Tob 12:6-20 within the narration (1) and of the structure of the angel's speech (2), their main motifs will be discussed in their literary and religious-historical context (3). A summary illustrating the characterisation of Raphael on the basis of Tob 12:6-20, concludes this article (4).

On the whole, it is important to keep in mind that the Tobit narration – aside from various fragments from Qumran – is basically passed on in two Greek recensions, the short version G I and the long version G II. Because the recension G II is considered to be the more original one, being revised and smoothed by G I, G II is used as the basis for the analysis of the text in this article.² However, as G I is to be regarded as a textform in its own value, also this recension has to be regarded occasionally in the event of pronounced variations concerning the content of particular passages.³

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- 1 Concerning date and place of composition cf. Ego, Buch 120ff.; Fitzmyer, Tobit 3-57, and others.
 - 2 Concerning the textual history of the book of Tobit cf. Hanhart, Tobit 7ff.; Hanhart, Text 11.19; Wagner, Polyglotte XIII. Concerning the Qumran tradition cf. Fitzmyer, Tobit (DJD XIX) 1-7 et al.
 - 3 Nicklas / Wagner, Thesen 141ff.; Ego, Mehrfachüberlieferung (forthcoming).

1. Raphael's Farewell Address in the Context of the Tobit Narration

Raphael's appearance in the Tobit narration is initialised by a rather long exposition which portrays the suffering of the two protagonists Tobit and Sarah and their devotion to God. Tobit belonging to the tribe of Naphtali, who was deported into the Assyrian exile to Nineveh and there distinguished himself by deeds of charity towards his people, loses his eyesight. After a quarrel with his wife Hanna, who taunts him, he is in such a desperate state that he beseeches God in an invocation to redeem him and to let him die (Tob 1:3-3:6). A second scene is constructed parallel to this, which at first does not seem to have anything to do with Tobit's fate. It is the story of Sarah in Ecbatana, who having lost already seven husbands in their respective bridal nights due to the demon Asmodeus and who has now to endure her maid's scorn and derision. She also turns to God in her distress and asks for early liberation by death (Tob 3:7-15).

Unexpectedly, the angel Raphael now enters the scene: Tobit's and Sarah's grievance has come before God, whereupon he sends the angel Raphael to heal Sarah and Tobit (Tob 3:16). These elements, namely the story of Tobit and the story of Sarah as well as the mission of the angel, are now put into relation: Tobit decides to send out his son Tobiah to claim a sum of money which he has deposited with a certain Gabael in Rages on his former travels. Tobiah looks for a travel companion and finds Raphael. He of course stays incognito and appears as the young man Azarias. After a wisdom speech of the old Tobit (Tob 4) and receiving many blessings from Tobiah's parents, the two of them start their long journey to Gabael. When crossing a river, the angel Raphael alias Azarias instructs Tobiah to catch a fish and to keep its bile, liver and heart as pharmaceuticals. Besides this, he tells him that Sarah, the daughter of his relatives Raguel and Edna, whom they are going to visit, is his intended bride; it thereby becomes evident that Tobiah already knows about Sarah's fate and her seven husbands. But Raphael comforts him. After their arrival in Ecbatana, Tobiah asks for Sarah's hand in marriage; as he is able to banish the demon Asmodeus with incense created by burning the fish's liver and heart on Azarias's instructions, the wedding night proceeds without any complications. During the fortnight of their wedding feast Raphael-Azarias claims the money from Gabael in Rages. Tobiah, knowing that his parents are concerned about him due to his long absence, thus bids farewell to his parents-in-law together with his newly-wed wife Sarah. When Tobiah and Sarah reach Ninive, the joy of Tobiah's parents is overwhelming.

Tobiah manages to heal his father's blindness with the fish bile, whereupon a great feast is held (Tob 5-11). Finally, Azarias reveals himself as Raphael and vanishes (12). With Tobit's great eschatological hymn to Jerusalem (Tob 13:1-14:1) the main part of the story ends. The book concludes with an epilogue which tells about Tobit's last words and his death as well as disclosing information concerning Tobiah's further life until his death (Tob 14:2-15).

2. Raphael's Farewell Address – A First Approach

Within these proceedings the passage Tob 12:6-20, in which Raphael reveals himself at the end of the narration, now gains special importance. For here it is not only the narration which talks about the angel, but also the angel speaks of himself – on a literary level – in the first person and hence, he unveils his own character which has been disguised for the protagonists so far. As Bianca Schnupp has pointed out in her dissertation on the concepts of the Guardian Angel, this scene can be generally classified as an "angeloophty". According to Bianca Schnupp, the distinguishing feature of the angeloophty consists in the angel becoming directly visible for certain men because he appears in their world. This distinguishes it from the unspecific talk of an angel's appearance, the angelophany.⁴ In the centre of traditional angeloophty, as it occurs for example in Gen 16, Gen 21, Num 22, Judg 6 and Judg 13, lies the narrative account of the divine word, by which God's help is granted to certain people in their immediate presence. In his account of Raphael's self-revelation, the author of the Book of Tobit has recourse to existing topoi but deals very freely with this form.⁵ Now, the revelation of Raphael is in the centre of the scene; the aspect of divine intervention does not seem directly relevant for the present but only in a collateral way when God's saving action is resorted to retrospectively.

To finalise the act of salvation and healing in the Tobit narration, the angel addresses the following words to Tobit and his son Tobiah before he returns to the heavenly world:

4 Schnupp, *Schutzengel* 92-96.

5 Schnupp, *Schutzengel* 95.

⁶ "Praise God and acknowledge before all the living the good things that He has done for you, so as to praise Him and sing hymns to his name. Declare God's word to all people with due honor; be not slow to acknowledge Him.

Call to glorification of God

⁷ It is right to conceal a king's secret, and to make manifest and acknowledge the acts of God with due honor.
Do good, and evil will not come upon you.

Ethical instructions

⁸ Prayer with fidelity and almsgiving with righteousness are a better good than wealth with wickedness. It is better to give alms than to hoard gold.

⁹ For almsgiving saves one from death; it wipes out all sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a full life;

¹⁰ but those who commit sin and do wrong are their own worst enemies.

¹¹ Now I shall tell you the whole truth and shall not conceal any detail from you. I have already told you, when I said, that it is right to conceal a king's secret, and to make manifest the acts of God in honorable fashion.

Announcement of revelation

¹² Well, when you prayed as did Sarah too, it was I who brought the record of your prayers into the glorious presence of the Lord; and likewise when you buried the dead.

Retrospection: The angel's actions in the past

¹³ And when you did not hesitate to get up and leave your dinner to go and bury the dead,
¹⁴ then I was sent to you to test you. God sent me at the same time to heal you and Sarah, your son's bride.

¹⁵ I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand in attendance and enter into the glorious presence of the Lord."⁶

Raphael's self-portrayal

6 Cited according to the translation of Fitzmyer, ad. loc.

Simply one look at this structure shows the dramatic composition of this speech: Raphael begins with a request to sound praise to God and then goes on with ethical exhortations. Not until then does he talk about his own actions in retrospect. This retrospective view also contains – as will be pointed out in the following – motifs which do not explicitly occur in the narration itself. Only subsequent to this review which shows Raphael's contribution to the events, the actual self-revelation takes place in which he presents himself as one of the seven Throne Angels.⁷

After the self-revelation the reaction of the addressed follows, they are frightened and fall onto their faces (Tob 12:16). After that, Raphael comforts Tobit and Tobiah and continues his speech, in which he emphasises the praise and worship of God once more. Finally, Raphael ascends into the heavenly world, with Tobit and Tobiah praising God and thanking him for his works and for the angel's appearance (Tob 12:21f). Thus, we find the following structure:

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| <p>¹⁷ but Raphael said to them, "Do not be afraid; peace be with you! Praise God at all times!</p> | <p>Greeting of peace;
call to fearlessness
and glorification of
God</p> |
| <p>¹⁸ When I was with you, it was not owing to any favor of mine that I was with you, but to the will of God.
So praise Him and sing to Him all your days.</p> | <p>Retrospection: Raphael as God's messenger
Call to glorification of God</p> |
| <p>¹⁹ Take note that I did not eat (or drink) anything; what you saw was a vision.</p> | <p>Retrospect: angel's not-eating</p> |
| <p>²⁰ Now then praise the Lord on this earth and acknowledge God. Look, I am ascending to the One who sent me. Write down all these things that have happened to you."⁸</p> | <p>Call to glorification of God and to written tradition of events</p> |

One look at the composition of Raphael's speech⁹ reveals that the motif of the glorification of God continues throughout the whole speech like a *cantus firmus*. As Raphael applies this motif in the first speech and final-

⁷ Concerning the character of this speech cf. Schüngel-Straumann, Tobit 155 ; Schnupp, Schutzengel 95.

⁸ Cited according to the translation of Fitzmyer, ad. loc.

⁹ A similar outline can also be found in Schnupp, Schutzengel 87. However, Tob 12,18f. is generally titled "explanation of his mission and appearance".

ises the second one with the same element, it forms a framework around Raphael's introduction of himself.¹⁰ When regarding the passage more closely, it becomes evident that Raphael withdraws; it is not his character as such that is involved but God's efficient intervention in favour of his protégés.¹¹

3. Central Motifs of Raphael's Farewell Address

3.1. Raphael as Throne Angel

The ending of the self-revelation exposes very plainly, that Raphael – together with six further angels – belongs to a group of angels who are exceptionally close to God in his heavenly world. At the same time he uses a form of self-introduction which is usually found when God introduces himself (cf. e.g. Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6).¹² When he is depicted as a being who enters into the glorious presence of the Lord, it becomes clear that Rafael belongs to the group of the Throne Angels. This depiction shows that here a reception of the concept of the divine council has occurred – members of this council are beings who surround God eulogising and offering subsidiary advice. This motif has to be regarded as one of the most central angelological conceptions of the Hebrew Bible. In the first place Isaiah's vision is to be mentioned here in which he sees seraphs, or Ezekiel's vision depicting the *היית* who carry the throne.¹³

Certainly, specific distinctions between previous biblical traditions and this passage become apparent when the initially uncharacteristic term *ἄγγελος* appears for the beings of this assembly of angels, which is semantically equivalent to Hebrew *מלאך*. For in the biblical tradition the term *מלאך* is not connected with the conception of the divine council but characterises God's messenger instead. He appears before men in human disguise and conveys God's message to them.¹⁴

Whereas in biblical tradition there is not any hierarchy of these beings within the divine council and, as a general rule, they are not named

10 See also Schnupp, Schutzengel 88.

11 Cf. Fitzmyer, Tobit 285-300; Moore, Tobit 265-275.

12 Schüngel-Straumann, Tobit 157; Schnupp, Schutzengel 90.

13 Cf. Neef, Gottes; cf. also Mach, Entwicklungsstadien 16-36; Krauss, Engel 23-29.

14 Concerning the biblical concept of messengers cf. Gen 16:7ff; 21:17-21; 18; 22:11-15; 31:11; Num 22:22-35; Judg 13; 2Kgs 1:3.5. A mingling of both concepts can be grasped predominantly in later biblical traditions; cf. Mach, Entwicklungsstadien 52-56.

as individual characters¹⁵, here an elevated group of heavenly beings is introduced when in this case Raphael is named as belonging to a group of seven angels altogether.

As such Tob 12:12 is one of the early testimonies of an angel heptade; parallels are also found in the Enoch tradition; Greek Enoch 20:7 as well as Ethiopian Enoch 81:5¹⁶ also talk of seven angels; four are named in ethEn 9:1; 40:2f.9. Apart from Raphael also Michael, Uriel and Gabriel are mentioned by name (ethEn 9:1; in 40:9 Phanuel instead of Uriel), additionally also Raguel and Sariel (ethEn 20; the Greek version names the absent seventh one, Remiel).¹⁷ These angels are entrusted with specific tasks and fields: As in the Tobit narration Raphael is appointed over „all illness and over all menace of human kind“ (40:9f.) resp. over the spirits of men (22:3); Michael is known as the angel of Israel (20:5; 22:3), Gabriel presides over all powers (40:9), resp. is appointed over Paradise, snakes and cherubs (20:7) and Phanuel presides over the penance and hope of all those who inherit eternal life (40:9).

3.2. Raphael's Retrospection regarding his Mission

An important part within Raphael's introduction of himself is his retrospect to the recent actions of salvation.

a) Raphael as Mediator of Prayers

When inquiring after the specific function which Raphael is supposed to fulfil in the divine presence in the heavenly realms, the so-called short version Tob 12:15 G I brings up an additional aspect. Here it says:

15 I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who present the prayers of the saints and enter into the glorious presence of the Holy One.¹⁸

Thus, Raphael characterises himself as a mediator of prayers. The conception of prayers being mediated is also found in the context of Tob 12:12, in the self-introduction and the angel's retrospect in both versions; in addition to this it occurs in Tob 3:15 G I, when Tobit's and

15 Names of angels do only appear in the later texts of the Hebrew Bible, cf. Dan 8:16; 9:21 (Gabriel) and Dan 10:13.21; 12:1 (Michael).

16 Cf. EthEn 87:2f.; 90:21.

17 Concerning archangels cf. the excursus in Nickelsburg, Enoch 207; the term first occurs in grEn 9B,1:4; 20:7.

18 Quoted according to the translation of Fitzmyer, ad. loc.

Sarah's prayers do not directly reach God but are conveyed to him by Raphael.¹⁹

This motif of prayers being mediated by angels as it occurs in the Book of Tobit is attested in other texts of Ancient Judaism, too. The presumably earliest preserved piece of evidence is found in the Book of Watchers in Ethiopian Enoch, which is dated to about the end of the 3rd century BC. For in ethEn 9:1 it is told that from heaven the four angels, Michael, Uriel, Raphael and Gabriel see all the blood that has been shed after the mingling of the watcher angels with human women and after all the unrighteousness that has been committed on earth. After that it says:

1 Then Michael and Sariel and Raphael and Gabriel looked down from the sanctuary of heaven upon the earth and saw much bloodshed upon the earth. All the earth was filled with the godlessness and violence that had befallen it.

2 And entering in, they said to one another, „The earth, devoid (of inhabitants), raises the voice of their cries to the gates of heaven.

3 And now to <us>, the holy ones of heaven, the souls of men make suit, saying,

'Bring in our judgement to the Most High,
and our destruction before the glory of the majesty,
before the Lord of all lords in majesty' (ethEn 9,1-3).²⁰

The angels report on the injustice on earth and on man's grievance to God. Thereupon, God reveals the truth about the watchers and their children and announces the future blessing that shall be imposed on earth (ethEn 9:4-11:2).²¹ Another example for the conception of prayers being mediated is found in ApocBaruch 11:4-9, "where Prince Michael comes down to receive the prayers of human beings and to present their deeds in the presence of God".²²

b) Further Motifs: The Angel's Temptation and Presence

Furthermore, Raphael's retrospection contains additional narrative motifs. But these are rather difficult to understand, particularly as they cannot be found in the actions that the narration spoke about before. In

19 Thus, a consequent concentration on the motif of prayer mediating takes place in G I; cf. explicitly Ego, *Mehrfachüberlieferung*.

20 Quoted according to the translation of Nickelsburg, Enoch 202.

21 Concerning concepts of mediating prayers of angels, which is to be distinguished from intercession, cf. ethHen 99:3; 104:1; grBar 11:4; TestDan 6:2; further indications in the excursus of Schnupp, Schutzengel 46-48; cf. Davidson, Angels 309-313.

22 Fitzmyer, Tobit 294.

the course of this, there are distinct differences between the two text forms:

Long version G II 12:12-15

12 Well, when you prayed, as did Sarah too, it was I who brought the record of your prayers into the glorious presence of the Lord; and likewise when you buried the dead.

13 And when you did not hesitate to get up and leave your dinner to go and bury the dead,

14 then I was sent to you to test you.

Short version G I 12:12-15

12 Well, when you prayed, as did your bride Sarah too, it was I who brought the record of your prayers into the presence of the Holy One; when you buried the dead, I was likewise present with you.

13 And when you did not hesitate to get up and leave your dinner to go off and bury the dead, your good deed did not escape me, but I was with you.²³

Following the motif of Raphael acting as a mediator, Tob 12:12 G II formulates "and likewise when you buried the dead" in a syntactically rather subsequent way. Being read in the context of the whole verse this change imposes several questions: Did Rafael deliver a prayer of Tobit to God when he buried the dead? Or did he convey the remembrance of these good deeds? Both possibilities are conceivable but can not be verified with the help of the text. Raphael's statement about himself seems to be likewise unexpected in Tob 12:14 G II, according to which the angel has already been sent to Tobit to test him when he was leaving his meal to bury the dead. As J. Fitzmyer has pointed out, this test probably means Tobit's blindness.²⁴ Both statements surprise when considered in connexion with the overall characteristic style as the angel Raphael is only introduced to the action in the context of Tobit's and Sarah's lamentations in Tob 3:16; Tob 1:18f. and Tob 2,2ff. mention the burial of the dead yet not Raphael.

In both cases, curiously, G I speaks more cautiously of the angel merely being present at the burial and – thus v. 13 – this good deed does not remain hidden. The abstruse statement in 12:12 G II ending resp. the motif of the testing, however, is missing. Even when the narration does not explicitly talk of the presence of the angel in 1:18f. and 2:2f., this version still does not seem to be as unexpected as version G II,

23 Quoted according to the translation of Fitzmyer.

24 Fitzmyer, Tobit 295.

as it is quite obvious that the angel has become aware of Tobit's actions in some way. In any case, with this motif, which is followed by v. 14 and the information of the angel's mission to heal the protagonists, the act-consequence correlation comes to the fore.

c) Raphael as the God-Sent Healer

Raphael is the God-sent healer – this being shown by the progress of his retrospect in Tob 12:14. In this, Raphael's speech converges with the beginning of the Tobit narration, namely Tob 3:16f., where it says:

"Then Raphael was sent to cure both of them: Tobit, by removing the white films from his eyes that he might see with them God's light; and Sarah, daughter of Raguel, by giving her marriage to Tobiah, son of Tobit, and freeing her from the wicked demon Asmodeus."

This fact is also displayed in the angel's name, which can be translated literally as "God heals". In the context of the speech this short reference to Raphael's occupation as a healer seems sufficient. Few words refer to the narration of the demon's banishment and the healing of blind Tobit. At the same time attention is directed to the fact that Raphael's ministry for the two suffering people is not primarily determined by spectacular rescue operations. Rather Raphael rescues blind Tobit and molested Sarah in the way that he constantly instructs Tobiah as to the right actions of healing and helping on their journey – he orders to catch the fish; he explains how to deal with it to produce the curative ointment and the incense, he gives instructions where Tobiah is supposed to stay overnight in Ecbatana and he also tells him that he should marry Sarah; eventually, he also instructs him to produce the ointment for his father's eyes and to apply it. The angel, who appears disguised in a human shape, thus occurs as a competent „wise“ counsellor.²⁵

As already mentioned above, Ethiopian Enoch also passes on this aspect of Raphael, who is appointed to deal with "all illness and all menace of human kind" (ethEn 40:9f). Apart from that, the same relation of the aspects of instruction and healing is to be found in the Book of Jubilees 10:10-14, when angels instruct Noah about the usage of medical herbs.

In addition, one has to refer to the connexion of wisdom elements and angels in general as it can be found elsewhere in biblical and early Jewish literature. Thus, already 2Sam 14:17 speaks of an angel who knows about good and bad; the divine council (as 1Kgs 22:19-20 and Isa

25 In particular B. Schnupp has called attention to this aspect of the Raphael figure; cf. Schnupp, *Schutzengel* 67-72, 97.

6:8 show) also holds the function of acting as an advisory assembly.²⁶ Furthermore, especially early Jewish literature in Qumran is familiar with the motif of the divine council's wisdom. Hence, the Sabbath Songs from Qumran bear names such as "the elim of knowledge" (אלֵי דַעַת - 4Q400 2 1; 4Q403 1 i 31), "the angels of knowledge" (דַּעַת מַלְאֲכִי - 11Q ShirSabb 2-1-9 5), or "spirits of the knowledge of truth and righteousness" (רוּחֵי דַעַת אֱמֶת וְצִדִּיק - 4Q405 19 4)²⁷. In the Susanna narration, an angel conveys the spirit of perception (πνεῦμα συνέσεως) to Daniel (Dan LXX 13:44), who then substantially should contribute to Susanna's rescue. Michael Mach, who collocated the crucial traditions on the angel's wisdom, elaborates on this: "One could interpret this verse to the effect that the angel receives this spirit like an object in order to transfer it to Daniel; however within the scope of the tradition of the divine council's wisdom it is more obvious to think of a knowledge which belongs to the angels and in which Daniel may participate."²⁸

d) The Angel Eating

Finally, in his second speech Raphael briefly points to the motif, according to which he did not ingest food. When Tobiah saw him eating, this was only an outward impression. This statement corrects and retrospectively explains the fact that Tob 6:6 G I explicitly speaks of Tobiah and Raphael having eaten the fish which was caught from the Tigris. In the context of this passage, the motif, which is put in rather abruptly, does also seem to serve the purpose of affirming the credibility of Raphael's statements. For it is the angels' feature par excellence that they do not ingest food. An equivalent motif occurs e.g. in the Testament of Abraham (4:9-11) as well when Michael does not take in any food; to disguise his identity God sends a spirit who consumes food so that Abraham is misled. In JosAs 15:9 the angel eats a honeycomb which he initially has created himself.²⁹

26 Concerning the divine council Neef, Gottes 17; see also Wacker, Wissen.

27 Cf. also the spirits of knowledge (רוּחֵי דַעַת) 1QH XI 22/23 (according to older numeration 1QH III 22/23).

28 Mach, Entwicklungsstadien 140 [translation mine].

29 Concerning this topic cf. Schnupp, Schutzengel, 90; cf. also. Ginzberg, Legends V 236, N.B. 143.

2.3. Raphael as Teacher of Glorification and of Mercy

a) Call to Glorification of God

The appeal to glorify God is the golden thread of Raphael's whole speech.³⁰ This appeal forms, as already explained above, the speech's anacrusis and at the same time its aim as well. If Raphael sees himself as an instrument of divine acts of mercy he now stresses which consequence this bears: It is God exclusively who should be praised. Doxology is the only appropriate form of reacting to the experiences.

The instruction to praise God is of course not a surprising element, but the angel confirms an ethical act with this resp. a behaviour that the protagonists already showed before in the course of the action. The appeal to praise and worship is a constituent part of a lesson of life which is taught by the aged Tobit to his son Tobiah before he departs (4:19). After Tobiah is wondrously spared during his wedding night, Raguel and his family intone a doxology to God's mercy (8:15-17). Finally, subsequent to the reunion with his son and to his healing, the aged Tobit says a prayer praising God for his mercy (11:14.15).

Also the first meeting with his daughter-in-law leads to a short glorification of God, who led Sarah to the house of Tobit (11:17).

However, when Raphael calls upon praising God once again after his speech, this is not a mere repetition of such elements. This call can only be seen on the background of his self-revelation und hence, he wants to stress that it really is God exclusively who should be praised, but not himself who has acted only apparently on Tobit, Tobiah and Sarah.

b) The Angel's Ethical Exhortations

In the context of the passage Tob 12:6-20 the ethical exhortation seems slightly unexpected; again this is a distinguishing feature of an angelophty within the Tobit narration.³¹ Raphael's words resemble sentences of wisdom, as they can be found in Tobit's testament in Tob 4:6-11.16; the topic is revisited in Tobit's legacy in Tob 14:8.9.11. With terms like "fidelity" (*αλήθεια*), "almsgiving" (*ἐλεημοσύνη*) and "righteousness" (*δικαιοσύνη*) (Tob 12:8) the central themes of the Book of Tobit are named.³²

30 Referring to this aspect is also Schnupp, Schutzengel 88.

31 Schnupp, Schutzengel 95.

32 Schnupp, Schutzengel 89. Altogether, these instructions remind of utterances as they are found in the Book of Proverbs or Jesus Sirach (thus for example Prov 10:2; Prov 11:4; Prov 25:2; 28:6; Sir 29:10-13; Sir 40:24). Cf. for these elements of wisdom in the Book of Tobit Rabenau, Studien 28-65.

As Bianca Schnupp has pointed out, these fit in directly with the characteristic style of the angel's speech. First of all, Raphael remembers the good deeds which God has done to Tobit and his family. In turn, this fact motivates to praise and to appropriate behaviour. Father and son are requested to do good in v. 7, and v. 8 makes clear how to perform it. The motif of giving alms is also a hint for Tobit and Tobiah to give the young man Azarias an appropriate wage for his companionship on the journey. Still, as it resonates implicitly, it seems better to spend one's wealth for people in need.

4. Summary: The Figure of Raphael in Tob 12:6-20

When finally asking how the figure of Raphael is characterised by this valedictory, several aspects may be discussed. On the one hand, one has to refer to the informative character of Raphael's speech as he gives an account of his being and his ministry. On the other hand, there is also an indirect characterisation of Raphael going on, for the speech in itself is of a performative character and may be described as a "speech act".

First let us consider the informative level: Raphael characterises himself as an angel belonging to that circle of seven angels who have access even to God in his heavenly world. In the course of this he functions as a prayer mediator and as God's messenger who was sent to heal Tobit and Sarah. In proportion to the narration itself the reader only gains scarce information concerning the angel's actions. Especially the issue of the means to heal is disregarded. Apart from that, within his speech, the angel refers to the motifs of temptation and his presence, which do not fit into the narration's overall characteristic style.

More meaningful than the merely informative contents of the speech however, is the fact that here the figure of Raphael is characterized by his speech act. His entire speech in its characteristic style reveals Raphael as a kind of wisdom teaching figure. In his review, Raphael makes accessible to the protagonists the comprehension of the events' transcendent character, when he emphasises that he is an angel who was sent by God. Raphael thus shows the rescued how they can interpret the events that have befallen them and how they can integrate these into their horizon of experience and understanding. God himself is the invisible hand which affected everything. Not his own goodness brought Raphael to Tobiah and Sarah but the will of God and he acted upon His behalf. The quintessence of Raphael's message is: Everything that has happened is not to be credited to him but is exclusively God's

initiative. Raphael is nothing more but an instrument by which God sends his healing to mankind.

Surely, to the addressees of this narration these connexions are not new for they have already been informed about the character of Raphael resp. of the young man Azarias by the narrator at the beginning of the tale in Tob 3:16 as well as in Tob 5. In a text-pragmatic way, within the story's overall concept the angel's speech is a condensation of the theological content of the narration. This theological content gives priority to God's care for his people which is expressed by his messenger. Moreover, the appellative note of Raphael's speech clearly shows that the angel does not want to merely reveal his true being but to refer to the transcendent character of the past events. As Raphael directly addresses Tobit and Tobiah with his calls, it becomes evident that he also wants to show, which conclusions the rescued should draw from the experience of their rescue. Among the charitable-ethical stimuli the doxological component of his message gains special meaning. With this, the angel implicitly reduces his own importance and emphasises once more that he only holds the commission of being a messenger. The importance of the glorification of God, which was also mentioned elsewhere within the Tobit narration, is now revealed in its entirety. The reaction of the addressed becomes clear in any case when, after the end of the angel's speech, it is said: "When they got up, they were no longer able to see him. They continued to praise God and to sing to His honour; they acknowledged God for those mighty deeds of His and were amazed how an angel of God appeared to them" (Tob 12:21f.).

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